Taking Liberties

Issue 16
Published by Anarchist Black Cross
40p
FREE TO PRISONERS

CLOSE...But not *that* close

FEATURE ON PRISON VISITS

Plus: Welling Rioters, Boot camps, Mumia, & more

SUPPORT CLASS STRUGGLE PRISONERS

NEWS...PRISONER UPDATES...NEWS...

I WILL BE FREE!

It's been a good couple of months for some prisoners (hooray!!) with several long-termers appealing and winning and all this despite the recent shutting down on prisoners appeals after the embarrassing Birmingham Six/Guildford Four cases.

In May, **Robert McGill** was freed after his conviction for murder was quashed. Although Robert's co-defendant had in fact killed a shopkeeper in a bungled robbery, Robert was convicted through Joint Enterprise which allows a person to be charged with a co-defendants actions if they agreed to commit a crime together. Robert had no intention to kill anyone and did not. Now he has been believed.

In June, **Emma Humphries'** case finally came to appeal. At the time of her conviction for the murder of her abusive boyfriend / pimp in self-defence, she was so confused and traumatised that she waived the right to an appeal. After 10 years inside, and hard work by the Justice For Women group, her case was brought back to court and Emma was set free. It also seems possible that this judgement may set a precedent for women serving time for defending themselves against asshole abusive men, having to fight a legal system biased against women, especially ones who don't bow down to the man-made rules.

Emma Humphries salutes her supporters after being freed by the Appeal Court

Justice for Women have contact with over 70 such woman in U.K jails. **Contact them at Justice For Women, 55 Rathcoole Gdns, London N8 9NE.**

Sara Thornton was also freed at the end of July, on bail pending her appeal being referred back to the Appeal Court by Michael Howard. Sara was jailed for life after killing her violent abusive husband Malcolm. That she's been let out is a BRILL sign, hopefully she'll be free permanently. The Daily Mail has been waging a campaign against her,digging up dirt from her first husband and Malcolm Thornton's relatives, calling for her to be sent back etc. Someone should subject the Mail's editor and journo hacks to a campaign of years of mental and physical abuse, threats and beatings - if you ask me.

George Long was set free in July, after doing 16 years for somebody else's murder of a youth in Deptford, S.London. There was no evidence involved except for confessions made under pressure of repeated questioning. These confessions were quickly retracted. Said to be easily suggestible in his youth, George was easy prey for cops who fitted him into the picture and it took half of his life to prove his innocence.

Our best wishes to the above three and to everyone still inside, fighting the 'justice' system for their freedom.

GARY & TONY APPEAL

Gary Mills and **Tony Poole** have finally got an appeal date after five years of fighting their frame-up for murder. They are going to the Appeal Court on 11-14 December this year.

They were both sentenced to life in 1990 for the murder of drug dealer Hensley Wiltshire in Gloucester. Although Gary admits he had a fight with Wiltshire on the night of his death, started by Wiltshire. Wiltshire had previously burgled a local cops' parents house: not a move to endear him to Gloucester's finest. After being picked up, he was shuttled between the hospital and cop-shop for seven and a half hours, finally being out under arrest the next morning. Half an hour later he was back in hospital, where he died. At the autopsy, his body was shown to have 60% more injuries than when he was first brought into hospital the night of the fight. NOT AT ALL SUSPICIOUS. On top of this is the usual catalogue of police work: prosecution witnesses lying to get charges dropped against them, another witness whose story supported Gary being told by the cops not to turn up in court...

A recent Trial and Error program (Channel 4), and a book of the same name by Toby Jessel, have exposed more shit on this case. Gary and Tony also have unearthed more evidence of police fuckery for the trial. A dossier on their case is available from them or from their support campaign, but it would help if people sent A4 SAEs, or even better Postal Order donations. We wish them all the best for the appeal and freedom. Gary and Tony have always supported and worked for other framed prisoners besides themselves, so drop them a line, and turn up to the court to support them. The Appeal Court is at the Royal Courts of Justice, the Strand, London, WC1.

GARY MILLS, WM0469, and TONY POOLE, WM1030, both at HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5 TZ.

Their campaign: c/o Garry Bloxsome, Robert Blackford & co., Hill House, 1 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA.

hyde park jailings

MARK SKELLY was sentenced to 12 months for his alleged role in the October 94 anti-Criminal Justice Act riot in Hyde Park. He's asking for people to write to him. **Mark Skelly, FH1589, HMP Ranby, Retford, Notts, DN22 8EU.**

TREFOR HARRIS received a 20-month sentence after being convicted of affray from Hyde Park. He pleaded guilty after the police produced strong video and photo evidence, given that he could have been hit with more serious charges. He's appealing against the length of his sentence. Drop him a line: **Trefor Harris, FH1875, HMP Brixton, Jebb Ave, London, SW2 5XF.**

LITTER BOMB

Niel Hansen is serving 3 years for sending a hoax bomb (a box of cat litter!) to the public relations manager of multi-nasty Glaxo, now the world's biggest pharmaceutical company. "I Pleaded guilty to this charge and to another of Criminal Damage to the home of the same person in return for the prosecution dropping allegations of a further £30,000 damage to businesses in the Stevenage area, and dropping all charges against my girlfriend, who was my co-defendant on all charges."

A long-time animal rights activist, Niel is appealing against his sentence. He's into getting letters, so don't delay, write today.

Niel Hansen, HF3184, HM Prison The Mount, Molyneaux Ave., Bovingdon, Herts, HP3 0NZ.

WELLING PRISONERS

Most people probably remember the anti-fascist march in Welling in October 1993, against the BNP HQ. A top cop went on telly two days before saying they'd received reports there was going to be trouble. This is code "We're going to kick their heads in and blame it on outside agitators." 1000s of people marched into a carefully laid police trap, were boxed in narrow streets by 1000s of cops, and the rest is history. Plenty of people fought back, but it was always on the cops' terms and the whole incident served their agenda.

A lot of people were nicked or picked up since, with the willing help of the tabloids who splashed people's faces across their front pages. Predictably, the cops made a huge effort to track the 'rioters' down, while ignoring or half-heartedly fucking up investigations into racist murders like that of Steven Lawrence. No big shock there, given the priorities of the police and their political bosses. Now, nearly two years later, people are coming up for trial and being sent down. In September 14 defendants were convicted of involvement in the riot and nine were sentenced to jail terms. Please support these prisoners as much as possible, send them letters and help out with other practical support, and spread the word/reprint their names and addresses.

Karl Anacoura, RN0599, 3 years.
From East London.
Sanjiv Karla, RN0598, 2 years.
From West London
Steven Kelly, RN0318, 16 months
From Scotland
The above are being held at:

HMP Elmley
Church Road, East Church
Sheerness
Kent ME12 4AY

(books and magazines can be sent, postal orders payable the HMP Elmley with prisoners name and number on back.)

Mark Gay RN0594, 3 years.
From North London.
Paul Gay, RN0593, 2 years 8 months.
From E.London
Charles Ryder, RN0595, 16 months.
From South London.
Russell Wild, RN0597, 3 years.
From West London.
John McFeely, RN0596, 2 years.
From Humberside.
These five are being held at:

HMP Canterbury
46 Longport
Canterbury
Kent CT1 1PJ

(Canterbury don't allow books/magazines unless they're sent directly from publisher or bookseller. Postal Orders should have prisoners name and number on front.)

Phil de Sousa, EJ3496, who has been inside awaiting sentence since last year, received 22 months and was released on the 4th October. He thanks everyone for the support he has received. Best wishes for staying out of their clutches, mate!

IN-CAR-CERATED

Jim Chambers and **Stuart Edwards**, long-term campaigners against the M11 in East London, have been found guilty of causing £35,000 worth of criminal damage to plant and machinery earlier this year. They have been sentenced to 18 months inside. They deny any involvement in the alleged crime.

Send letters of support to:
Jim Chambers PV2504 and Stuart Edwards, PB1864, both are being held in Pentonville Prison, Caledonian Rd, London, N7 8TT.

Taking Liberties is produced by: THE ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

• The Anarchist Black Cross is a revolutionary organisation, that works towards the abolition of the prison system as part of the class struggle.

• We recognise that prisons are an integral part of the class system and vital to the survival of capitalism and the preservation of the rich/the ruling class. Prisons can only be abolished as part of a social and economic revolution that destroys capitalism.

• Although we welcome changes in the prison system which make life easier for our comrades inside, we will not waste our time & energy begging the state to reform its prisons, because the system cannot be reformed out of existence. We don't believe we have all the solutions, but we are working class people who have faith in our class to find those solutions. We have many ideas on how this can be done, and are willing to work, discuss and swap ideas with others.

• We work with prisoners, their families and supporters on the outside, to educate ourselves and other working class people as to the true reality of prisons. This exchange of information is a crucial part of our work.

• We support such prisoners as:

- Revolutionary, anarchist , political prisoners, & other working class people jailed for resistance to capitalism, eg strikers;

- Prisoners fighting back against the prison system from inside:

- Working class people jailed as a result of having to break the law in order to get by:

- People resisting injustice in their lives, e.g. women jailed for killing violent and abusive partners/rapists, people jailed for resisting racist or police attacks.

• We will not support:

- Anyone involved in anti-social & oppressive crime, i.e. rape, child abuse, racist attacks, on that basis alone ;

- Crime which is anti-working class,eg mugging/burgling other working class people, in short robbing your own.

However we recognise the destructive effect that life under capitalism has on our behaviour, & will consider each case individually.

The ABC is a National Network of local, autonomous groups, meaning that each group is free to carry out work demanded by their local situation.However, each local group is, as part of the collective, responsible and accountable to the other member groups.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Support prisoners. People inside need letters of support, visits, money and practical help. If you aren't sure how to go about it, ask for our leaflets on Writing to Prisoners & Practical Support (see back page)

• Distribute information and news about prisons. The ABC has leaflets on prisoners cases/prison issues.

• Subscribe to Taking Liberties: see back page. You can also distribute copies. Or send us loadsamoney!

•Send us news about prisons or prisoners.

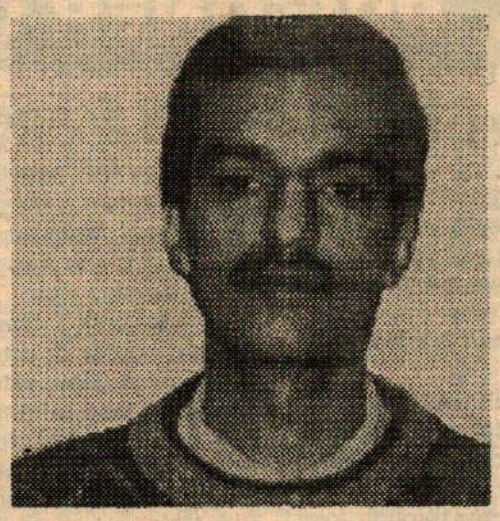
TAKING LIBERTIES,
C/O LONDON ABC,
121 RAILTON ROAD,
LONDON, SE24 0LR.
tel: 0171 274 6655
Fax: 0171 326 0353

FREE SATPAL!

Satpal Ram's case is finally coming up for appeal. Satpal is an asian man jailed in 1986 for life for murder, after he defended himself against a racist attacker in an indian restaurant in Lozells, Birmingham. Satpal objected to a group of 6 white men making racist comments, one of them attacked him with a broken glass and Satpal fought back. The man later died after refusing treatment. Satpal never denied defending himself, but was charged with murder. At his trial, his two (white) barristers persuaded him to change his plea and try to get off with manslaughter. Being inexperienced and thinking lawyers knew what they were doing (some hope!) he went along with it. They also stopped him from giving evidence. Bengali speaking witnesses who supported his story were not provided with interpreters, so the jury couldn't understand them.

Not surprisingly in the face of all this, Satpal was convicted of murder. Obviously he had no real trial. His first appeal was rejected in 1989.

Satpal was the victim of a racist attack, and defended himself. If he had not he would probably have been killed. A white killer of an asian would have received a light sentence or walked free, given the racist bias in the legal system. Satpal has also faced racial abuse and assaults from screws since his conviction, notably at Full Sutton last year (see TL no 13).



After fighting the Home Secretary's 1993 decision not to send his case back for appeal, through judicial reviews, Satpal has finally got another chance. He and his supporters are asking people to come to a demo outside the Appeal court on the opening day of the trial.So get yourselves down there:

The High Court, The Strand, London, WC1,**Friday October 20th at 10am.** Spread the word. For more info contact the Free Satpal Campaign, 101 Villa Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham, B19 1NH. Tel 0121 551 4518.

LATEST NEWS:

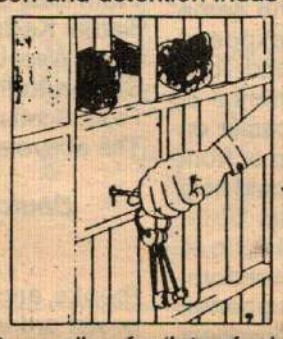
On Wednesday 13th September, Satpal was put into segregation again in Full Sutton Jail, on the pretext that he had a wedge under his cell door (so do many other cons). The real reasons for him going down the block seem to be the mutiny charges against Satpal and others from Whitemoor, December 1993, being thrown out of court for the second time in August, and the move onto Satpal's wing of a screw who was a prosecution witness in the mutiny trial. Satpal says the screw started causing trouble for hm straight off.

The Free Satpal campaign organised a phone, fax and letter blockade of Full Sutton, who received over 150 messages of protest within the week from organisations and individuals.Satpal was being denied food, exercise and a mattress. Since then he has been ghosted to Armley. It's allclearly intended to interfere with his work on his case, at a vital stage a month before his appeal.

Write to Satpal Ram, E94164, HMPArmley, Leeds, LS12 2TJ.

THORNY PROBLEM

As you may have heard, the British Government announced in September plans for a new-style youth detention centre, to open in Summer next year. Thorn Cross, which will hold 60 inmates, (each one costing £28,000 a year to keep), seems almost entirely based on the US 'boot camps', with their tough military-style regime, hard physical labour and training, and harsh discipline. As usual, ministers and civil servants have been junketing over to the US and studying what the yanks (world leaders in the prison and detention industry) are doing. Not TOO closely though, as all the evidence over there suggests that in common with every other type of regime, boot camps don't make a blind bit of difference to re-offending or beating decent values into lawless youth - it just makes them knackered and angry. But to keep the liberals and prison reformers happy, the plans for Thorn Cross allow for 'lots of education and therapy', not just mindless violence. Oh, that's all right then.



This sort of "we're getting tough, oh yes" institution has been tried before - it didn't 'work'. All they ever do is fuck people's heads up and dig people further into the lives we're already forced to live. Big Daddy Howard says we need to be taught right from wrong and that if we're naughty we'll be punished. We can't just hope the young people dragged through this shit survive. This is also up to us on the outside, to give them support and make sure they aren't isolated. We need to put the boot on the other foot.

All you prisoners reading this might not have known it - but YOUR cell could be a place of spiritual retreat! That's right! Says who? The Phoenix Prison Trust, a charity based in Oxford that's working with prisoners, to try and help them "change their view of themselves" and overcome violence etc. The Trust claim to be working with over 1000 prisoners in the UK, getting them to take up yoga, meditation and prayer. They say prisoners are finding it a great help in controlling violent natures and preventing outbursts. "By enabling them to use a prison cell as a place of retreat or ashram,[they can] re-perceive themselves as people, using their time to spiritual purpose...".Prison Governors, screws and psychologists are said to be impressed by the effect. Hmmmm. If they are impressed, there's a reason: they are interested in controlling prisoners and keeping them in a position of powerlessness. Whether or not yoga helps individuals not to fire up at each other, it is clearly being supported insofar as it will keep people pacified, on their own, easily controlled. If prisoners don't "perceive themselves as people" it's largely because of the dehumanising, brutal, boring prison system (and often life outside!). A retreat into spirituality isn't going to change this, only encourage people to avoid and hide from it, instead of facing up to changing it.

YOGA TO BE JOKING!

Yoga might be of some use though. The Transcendental Meditation cult believe that through meditation they can learn "Yogic Flying", levitating themselves off the ground by the power of their minds. *Taking Liberties* suggests lifers might want to practice this in the exercise yard - as near the outside wall as you can.

CLASS WAR BANNED

Prisoners in UK jails were banned from receiving the April/May edition of the popular revolutionary paper Class War, on the grounds that contained "confidential information". Under Standing Order 58 34 (8), the Director General of the Prison Service, ordered that the paper not be issued to prisoners, because it contained the addresses and phone nos of several cabinet ministers and other worthies. Naughty naughty. Some of these apparently received unwanted early morning calls. A spokesman for the prison Service stated: "We cannot take the risk of this information falling into the hands of serious criminals." That's funny. I'd have thought the REALLY serious criminals already had all these top people's phone numbers.

The latest edition of Class War has apparently been mostly allowed in, although in common with Taking Liberties and other 'offensive' publications, it is regularly interfered with by screws and governors, who just can't stand to see prisoners reading good wholesome literature.

Class War now has a Prisoners Branch, which looks after its contacts with cons and is hoping to work with other prisoners support groups to build links with prisoners. Contact CW Prisoners, PO Box 467, London, E8 4QX, or PO Box 3241, Birmingham, B8 3DP.

Meanwhile, all prisoners have been banned from using phones inside to contact the media, either papers or Radio/TV.This is obviously aimed at people exposing the grim conditions they are held in, brutality or fighting their convictions: since access to phones has become standard in jails, they have become useful ways of getting info out. The Order has already been used against cons at Long Lartin Jail in Worcestershire, which has a high proportion of framed prisoners. Access to the press has sometimes made the difference in getting a wrongly convicted prisoner's case aired, or even brutality inside, appalling conditions etc exposed. Not surprisingly this winds up prison bosses. Now, "Any inmate wishing to speak to the media must apply in writing, to the Governor to use an official phone. Circumstances where this would be allowed would be wholly exceptional and extremely rare." I bet.

PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY 1995

As regular readers of Taking Liberties will know, August 10th is commemorated every year as Prisoners Justice Day: remembering people who have died in jail, whether driven to suicide by the depression and frustration of prison life, murdered by screws, or through neglect and the general unhealthiness of being locked up.

The Anarchist Black Cross Network has been holding demonstrations and activities in the UK on 10th August since 1992. Every year since then, we have slowly been building Prisoners Justice Day, trying to increase awareness of deaths inside and the oppressive system that allows and encourages them to take place.

This year there were 6 demos held around Prisoners Justice Day. Below we've got a brief summary of what took place:

LONDON: On 10th London ABC and Reading ABC, London Class War, plus members of Cambridge Anarchists, the Revolutionary Communist Group, and supporters from London, Oxford and Canterbury picketed Stoke Newington Police Station. There were 40 of us in all. Pamela Simms, whose mother Aseta was killed by Stokey cops in 1971, came down; there was a fairly good reaction from passers-by. No cops gave us any grief all day! We handed out 600 leaflets and did some shouting and singing, including a rendition of 'Do the Stokey Cokey'.

On Sat 12th, we organised a demo and attempted occupation of the Disney Shop on Regent St, in the West End, in protest at the death sentence and imprisonment of **Mumia Abu Jamal**. Why Disney?

Well they're a big bastard corporation that colludes in the US corporate state and they're full of shit when it comes to pay, controlling their workers like slaves, and supporting racist and reactionary laws in the States. About 100 people came, including people from the Friends of MOVE, Green Revolution, and many others. We marched down the road, with a bloke dressed as the Grim Reaper at the front, a mock coffin with Mumia's name on, handing out leaflets and making a racket. We handed out 1500 leaflets in all. We then tried to occupy the shop, and block the doors, but were thrown out. The cops decided we were a menace and tried to move us on, and there were 6 arrests, all charged with obstruction. The Grim Reaper was one of those nicked! Four people later accepted bindovers to keep the peace, despite two being held till Monday. Two are pleading not guilty and fighting the case. The demo was short but loud and generally agreed to be a success, despite the nickings. It is certainly the biggest demo the ABC has managed to get together in a long while. We also got on the radio and some press interest.

In **BRIGHTON** thirty people or so held a demo on the 10th outside the UK HQ of American Express, in solidarity with **Mumia Abu- Jamal**. They then managed to invade the building and get on the roof, causing some disruption. They were all thrown out.

LEEDS: Thirty-odd people from Huddersfield ABC, Leeds ABC, Sheffield ABC and others handed out loads of leaflets in the town centre, about Prisoners Justice Day, deaths in the notorious Armley Prison and the equally murderous Bridewell copshop.

In **DURHAM** about 15 people handed out 1000 or so leaflets in the town, and outside Durham Jail, about deaths in prison, and the case of **Kenny Carter**, serving life for the murder of his cellmate in Durham Prison (the bloke killed himself and Kenny was framed for the murder to take the heat off the prison). There was a good local response, some money was collected for Kenny, and they also held a stall. They got into the local papers, an article and a big pic, with info on Kenny's case.

In **BIRMINGHAM** Brum Class War, and other groups including the Free Satpal Ram Campaign, about 25 people in all, picketed Winson Green Prison.

Sadly a Class War gig in London,scheduled for the 7th Aug to coincide with Prisoners Justice Day,and billed as a benefit for their prisoners work, was cancelled due to cop pressure on the venue.

All in all this year was pretty good! It seems likely that we should make next year even better. If anyone is interested in getting involved with planning bigger and better events next August, get in touch with your nearest ABC group.

PRISONERS OF WAR

One year on from the IRA's ceasefire as the British government stalls and obstructs the 'peace process', prisoners of the irish war remain inside. More than ever before, the issue of the treatment and release of prisoners is central to the struggles of the republican/nationalist community. In March of this year the organisation Saoirse ('Freedom') was launched in Britain, to campaign for the release of Irish political prisoners.

In the north of Ireland there are few families who remain unaffected by the issue of prisoners: either they have a family member who has been imprisoned, as a result of the war, or know someone who has. Prisoners of the war are sustained and supported by their communities while inside, and welcomed back into their communities on release.

A war which started through catholic communities attempting to change the unionist mini-state, which ensured unionists had all the best jobs, houses, and control of the councils and police. When nationalists get tired of taking it and fought back, the army was sent in to make sure things were brought back under control. IRA/INLA prisoners are inside for fighting against this military occupation force, that laid siege to their communities, propped up the unionist domination of the north, supplied arms to loyalist death squads, attempted to divide and terrorise 'nationalist' areas. Men and women inside were convicted under emergency 'terrorist' legislation, (the envy of repressive regimes the world over), often in Diplock Courts (one judge, no jury), after beatings and torture from the RUC, or on the word of supergrasses.

PRISONERS IN THE STRUGGLE

From the start prisoners were central to the resistance, through internment without trial for nationalists in 1971, through the blanket/no-wash protests of the '70s, where republican prisoners who refused to wear prison uniforms were denied clothes, and wore only blankets and smeared their shit and menstrual blood on the walls. At the the height of the prisoners struggle, men in Long Kesh Prison and women in Armagh went on hunger strike to demand political status. Ten men died, starving themselves to death. But 1000s marched , joined the Support Committees, rioted and organised in support of the prisoners struggles. As a result, in the H Blocks, republican prisoners won many of the freedoms they had been campaigning for.

(Apologies for this brief summary if you know all this!)

TRANSFER CAMPAIGN

The Irish political prisoners in jails in England have been treated if anything worse than in jails in Northern Ireland. For years relatives and friends campaigned for them to be transferred to the North, to be nearer their families for visits etc: the British government turned a deaf ear. In 1992, the Home Office adopted the recommendations of the Ferrer Report on Irish political prisoners, including that they should all be transferred to the North. This was also in line with the Woolf Report, which generally suggested that all prisoners should be held nearer their homes. Still nothing was actually done. In fact they are being held in harsher conditions now, during the ceasefire, than at the height of the bombing campaigns in the City of London. Here are just some examples.

OPEN...

Early this year, the Home Office agreed that Irish political prisoners would be allowed open visits, ie they could have personal contact with those visiting them but obviously surrounded by screws, cameras, microphones.

...CLOSED

In July Michael Howard unilaterally reversed this decision, putting them back on closed visits.

When **Feilim O hAdhamaill** and **Patrick Kelly** were transferred to Whitemoor Jail in July, they were told they would have to do prison work, wear prison uniform, which has not been forced on IRA/INLA prisoners since the early 1980s. Feilim was also denied the right to converse with his wife and children in Irish, his native language: a 'privilege' he had previously won by much campaigning. Feilim was due to be transferred to a prison in the North of Ireland (under marginally more relaxed arrangements on this issue that have prevailed under the ceasefire.) He was told at Whitemoor that he would not be moved unless he accepted the new regime.

DIRTY WAR

Patrick and Feilim refused to accept the regime, and were put down the punishment block. They immediately went on dirty protest, demanding transfer and the ending of the order that they wear uniforms and work. They were joined on the dirty by **Michael O'Brien**, and 2 INLA prisoners, **Martin McMonagle** and **Liam Heffernan**, all protesting the conditions they were being held in and demanding transfer. All the prisoners were given the usual treatment down the block, a pretty unsanitary place at the best of times. The protest was set to spread, with two INLA prisoners in Full Sutton Jail, Eamonn O'Donnell and Sean Cruikshank, being about to join in, when they were transferred to Maghaberry: obviously to try and prevent an escalation. Shortly after that in late July, Feilim, Liam and Martin were all transferred. Never say protest doesn't achieve anything.

Michael O'Brien is still, at time of writing, on hunger strike, over the conditions he is being held in and the demands being made on him.

REFUSING TO BE PAWNS

It's clear that the prisoners are intended to be pawns in the government's game, trying to force the IRA/republican movement into a position of surrender. Being part of an organised military organisation, the prisoners have a tendency to hang together, organise, stand up for themselves collectively. This is something the prison bosses and their political superiors hate, and desire to crush by whatever means they can.

It's vital that these prisoners are given support, not only to win transfers to prisons nearer home but release as part of any 'peace deal'. Saoirse is fighting for this. Get involved.

Saoirse,
PO Box 3293, London, NW5 1RA
Tel 0181 533 6559.

London ABC has a list of all the POWs being held in England, if you want one send us an SAE.

This article was largely nicked from *Troops Out*, magazine of the Troops Out Movement. They can be contacted at BM Tom, London, WC1N 3XX. Thanks a lot to them.

SHOTS
A Blueprint for the Future

If anyone should wonder exactly what Michael Howard ultimately has in store for the prison system, then one need look no further than Shotts Prison in Lanarkshire,Scotland,where the process of screwing down on conditions and basic rights has now reached its definitive conclusion. Prisoners everywhere should take serious heed of what is going down at Shotts and recognise it for what it is: the ultimate blueprint for long-term prison regimes of the 1990s: unless resistance is organised now.

Opened in the early 1980s as a showcase maximum security prison, Shotts, with its state-of-the-art prison architecture and modern 'living units', was intended to replace the fortress-like Peterhead Prison as Scotland's main long-term prison. Whereas Peterhead, with its traditional and strong convict culture and history of rebellion had always been recognised as a "cons' nick" somewhere where the balance of institutional power had long shifted in the prisoners' favour after decades of open resistance and open confrontation - Shotts, by contrast, was created and designed to restore power to the gaolers within a physical environment purpose-built for small-group control and total surveillance. While the Scottish office was extremely keen to present an early media image of Shotts as a bright new campus- like place with an enlightened regime, the reality was that it had created a Scottish Marion, and provided an ultimate operational blueprint for the total control and pacification of long-term prisoners throughout the entire Scottish Prison system.

Virtually from day one prisoners received into Shotts were confronted by a megalomaniac administration and a regime of unremitting harassment and bullying. New 'anti-drug initiatives' were simply used as a cover for the systematic abuse and humiliation of both prisoners and their visitors: visitors were, and still are, frequently strip-searched, including the elderly and small children, and prisoners have to submit to an anal search after leaving visits.

It was this sort of inhuman treatment that caused an explosion of rage at the prison in 1987, when prisoners revolted and attempted to wreck the institution. And it was as a direct result of the barbaric methods employed to put down the uprising and regain total long-term control of the gaol that the prison exploded again in 1992. Following the second uprising, the administration at Shotts decided to lock the gaol down permanently and literally cage up its inmates. Having deliberately provoked them to riot twice, the Shotts administration now turned the prison to its always intended use as one mass control unit.

John Brannan, a prisoner at Shotts since March this year, describes the current situation at the prison:

"It's now been over two years since the last major disturbance here and the place is still in a state of semi-lockdown, which looks like it's intended to be permanent. Each Hall here has now been divided up into six seperate sections, each one containing 20 prisoners who are caged as a group into a tiny self-contained area that is sealed almost the whole time by locked grill gates. The screws themselves remain out of reach beyond the gates, entering the sections only to lock us up in our cells when and if necessary. We only ever leave the sections for work and are made to walk in single file to the work-sheds, usually through a barrage of abuse and threats from young macho screws, screaming at prisoners to get their hands out of their pockets or get their shirts tucked in. The atmosphere of bullying is always something that you're up against here, day and night.

Tension within the living sections, where prisoners are cooped up together in small groups, is really bad, and guys just pace up and down all the time full of anger and paranoia. The screws obviously feel safe and in control with everyone locked up behind gates and have dished out so much shit since the lockdown was enforced that they're now too frightened to open up the gates and deal with us as a larger group, face to face. The thing is, people here are being seriously damaged mentally while the lockdown continues, and I think that few of us will ever be able to readjust to normal life again."

In 1994 the Scottish Inspectorate for Prisons strongly criticised the lockdown regime at Shotts, describing it as unjustified in its present permanent form, and urged the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to begin operating an open regime. That criticism and recommendation have so far been ignored.

The regime currently in place at Shotts is not some temporary aberration or contingency measure forced on an unwilling administration by the actions of dangerous an unmanageable prisoners - it is in fact now the established means by which large groups of long-term prisoners in Scotland are being controlled and managed. In fact, Shotts was recently designated by the SPS as Scotland's main induction and allocation centre for long-term prisoners, somewhere to 'screen' and 'process' them before their allocation to other prisons in the system. It is from this 'basic regime', designed to crush spirits and root out potential leaders that all long-term prisoners now have to 'graduate' from here in Scotland.

With the New Right agenda for prison regimes now in full flow, Shotts represents a standardised strategy for eradicating prisoner' basic rights and exerting total and absolute control over their lives.This is the sort of prison regime envisaged by Michael Howard when he talks about 'austere regimes' and 'making prisoners earn privilleges' and this is what all prisoners throughout Britain face unless they resist and fight back.

Prisoners have fought and suffered for decades in their struggle for human rights and civilised conditions of imprisonment, and it is a fight that must continue and be supported with even greater determination at this critical time when the state is launching probably its most vicious assault yet on their rights and conditions.

John Bowden, 1273/94, HM Prison Perth, Edinburgh Rd, Perth, Scotland.

Cons on the roof during a riot at Shotts in 1990

DROP HIM A LINE...

Carl Robinson is serving 3 years for attempted GBH (Section 18) on police, affray and criminal damage, after he, in his own words, "smashed up a rich scum's house, and ended up on the roof, keeping 35 (some armed) police at bay for 3 hours by lobbing the tiles at them." This was in July 1994. He was sentenced this March. Carl is an anarchist, supporter of Class War and has previously been inside for animal rights activities. He would like letters from anyone interested in writing.

Due to being an anarchist and unwilling to take any shit from the screws, Carl has saw a great deal of the punishment block at HMP Bedford. He sent this account of one incident:

"I entered Bedford on Nov 28th last year from Woodhill, on remand, was given a prison shirt to wear with my own clothes as they wouldn't let me have my jumper, as it had holes in it! I was told once on the wing to take the shirt off. "If you give me my jumper." "No!" was the reply, So, No I won't take the shirt off. Result: a nicking sheet . In the morning, went to get my breakfast, had some trouble and was given another nicking sheet! Lost 3 days association for the first one and was fined £3 for the second! Ummm..... (and lost the shirt!)

Then was nicked again. This was for an incident when they were searching my cell. They said I threatened to kill both officers searching my cell! The Gov adjourned it so I could get my solicitor, wouldn't let me phone my solicitor, so gave me a letter that my solicitor never received! Taken back to the block again where a different governor said that it hadn't been adjourned to get hold of my solicitor, so found me guilty and got 3 days solitary confinement.

Then a month later was given a nicking sheet for allegedly throwing a metal tray from my window, was found guilty and received 5 days bang-up. Another inmate with the same charge got a caution. Ummm...

I was down the block every month!

Here (HMP The Mount) so far i have been down the block once. That being for refusing to go in my cell one night, as Reception had refused to give me some copies of Class War that had been sent in. I wrote a Request/Complaint form out and it came back saying I could have them, except for one which is banned; Reception still refused them! So 8 officers dragged me off to the block, put me in a strip cell and got the doctor down to check my hands, that still hurt.

Was found guilty of 'refusing a direct order', lost 5 days association and 2 days remission, suspended for 2 months. But then got ALL my copies of Class War."

Write to Carl Robinson, BV1659, HM Prison The Mount, Molyneaux Ave, Bovingdon, Herts, HP3 0NZ.

Taking Liberties Feature:

PRISON VISITS

Being in prison means isolation: from family, friends, loved ones, outside links, from many ties and activities that people take for granted on the outside. The isolation, being cut off from those ties, is one of the main damaging effects of prison life: which for many prisoners can lead to alienation, frustration, and in some cases to self-harm, and suicide. Links to outside are vital for the daily survival of many inside. Visits are probably the most important of these links. The power of a visit, contact with the outside world, a chink of light through the wall, is hard to capture.

But like every aspect of prison life, visits are an area of struggle between cons and the prison system. Although visits are supposed to be a prisoner's 'right', nothing is guaranteed under the current prison system. The Prison Service in the UK don't even recognise it as a 'right'; they now view visits as a 'privilege', a reward for not rocking the boat. To be taken away as a punishment, whenever prison authorities feel they can get away with it. On the ground, there is no doubt that many screws resent prisoners getting visits; not just because they don't like having to do any work, but also because many feel that the scum they see most cons as being don't deserve links with the 'free world'. This attitude often extends to anyone visiting a prisoner as well: just being related, married, associated with someone in jail makes you scum as well. Not all screws treat people like this, but it's all too often obvious.

Prisoners and anyone who visits them knows what visits can mean and how they are fucked about with. The agony, expectation, tension of waiting for someone to visit. For remand prisoners, just not knowing if you'll get a visit today. Being treated like shit by screws - on both sides of the table. Sitting in the waiting room, watching the clock...how fast the time goes once you're in. Turning up at a nick, sometimes 100s of miles away from home, to find a sniggering screw tell you that 'he was moved to Parkhurst at 8am this morning': after you'd been assured yesterday it was OK to visit. For relatives of Category A prisoners, being quizzed by the police before you can be approved to visit, them poking through your life and refusing you approval on petty pretexts. For both prisoners and sometimes visitors, being poked and groped and strip-searched. And increasingly in this country, but as standard in the US and other places, having to talk to your husband or lover or father or son on a closed visit, through plate glass and mesh, unable to touch or even hear properly....

Of course like very area of prison life, this does not go off without opposition and resistance. As Paul Ross points out in his article, prisoners are constantly protesting over restrictions and interference with their visits. Individually, like in the case of **Alan Byrne**, who went on hunger strike to demand a transfer nearer to his family, after being moved 200 miles away, making visiting him a tough job. And collectively, like the cons at Whitemoor jail, who this spring and summer staged several protests including sit-downs in the yard, mini-riots and dirt protests over the intrusive searches of visitors and plans to install microphones on visiting tables, in addition to the cameras already there. Sometimes these protests are successful, as in Alan's case, sometimes not. But resistance is vital to keep the spirit alive. Things cons see as a right now would not exist if not for mass prison struggles in the 70s, and many changes were set in motion after the riots of April 1990. Whatever the prison authorities try, people will fight back.

We wanted to try and cover a wide range of aspects of visits in this issue of Taking Liberties. As it is we didn't have many responses to our appeal from last issue. We've put something together from what we got. The six articles here show the way visits are used to try and control or simply frustrate prisoners: often in a random and spiteful way. There is much more that could be said on the subject from both inside and outside the walls. We welcome any further contributions on this issue, from prisoners, their families, friends & supporters.

A STATE OF HYPOCRISY AND DOUBLE TALK

By Paul D. Ross

In its evidence to the Woolf Enquiry in 1990, the Prison Service stated:

"The Prison Service has given a high priority in recent years to strengthening inmates' links with their families. This is wholly consistent with the duty of the Service, as expressed in the Statement of Purpose: 'to look after [prisoners] with humanity and to help them lead law-abiding and useful live after their release.' The maintenance of strong ties between inmates and their families is crucial to fulfiling both parts of this duty. It is also specifically required by Prison Rule 31(1)."

(14.222, Woolf Report).

The Prison Service's view of family visits is that they are a privillege to be earned and subject to local management discretion 'in the case of Category A prisoners, discretion of Central Prison Administration, Doc 1 Division). This view was not shared by Lord Woolf, who observed:

"We have given our views on the Prison Service's use of the term 'privillege'...visits are an entitlement - a right - not a privillege..."

(14.226, Woolf Report)

Despite this, prisoners continue to be located hundreds of miles away from families and friends, making regular visits impossible due to cost, ill-health or a variety of reasons. As a consequence, prisoners have resorted to protests of one kind or another in attempts to obtain transfer nearer their homes. In turn, such protests have resulted in prisoners being subject to administrative segregation and/or transfers under IG 28.93 (known as laydowns). [1] Some prisoners, more desperate than others, have resorted to 'hunger strikes'; one such prisoner, Alan Byrne (another miscarriage of justice) resorted to a lengthy hunger strike recently following his transfer to a northern prison, Full Sutton, hundreds of miles away from his family (*NB: see 'Taking Liberties' no. 13*). A demonstration regarding conditions in Full Sutton Segregation Unit attracted media press focus and called attention to Alan's plight and that of others. Consequent to this Alan was moved to a prison in the Southern area. Others are not so fortunate, and spend months, many months, protesting which can be, and frequently is, a costly process in terms of lost remission, administrative segregation, as well as other official sanctions designed to end such conduct. In a system specifically geared to silencing criticism, such individuals rarely make the news and in the rare instances that they do it will have been at a cost of much suffering to the prisoner and family. On such occasions both local management and central administration can be relied upon to deflect/counter criticism from its inexhaustible quotes of innuendoes, excuses or plain disinformation.

'Community prisons' were acknowledged as an effective measure in minimising the psychological effects of imprisonment on families, friends and prisoners. One of the common effects of long-term imprisonment is the alienation from family and friends, leaving prisoners more vulnerable to the adverse effects of imprisonment. The term 'prisonisation' is used to describe the process, whereby prisoners have to adopt the norms and values of the institution. To oversimplify, the adverse psychological effects of imprisonment,ie. the 'prisonisation' process, is mitigated to some degree by prisoners' contacts with the outside world, particularly family. Extensive research has been conducted in this area substantiating this and yet ironically the UK's record in safe-guarding family ties within its penal institutions is abysmal. It criminalises the families of Cat A prisoners, requiring them to complete copious official forms, supply photographs of themselves and undergo interrogation by police before they can visit their loved ones, a process that can take months: failure to comply with these demands results in prohibition of family visits. It [the Prison Service] makes no provision for conjugal visits [unlike the rest on Europe], choosing instead to pay the fines imposed by the European Court for breach of this fundamental human right. It imposes 'restrictions' on visits under a variety of pretexts against which there is no appeal.

The Prison Service's perception of prisoners' visiting rights can be summarised by the following account of a long-term prisoner who has not seen close family for over a decade

JACKO'S STORY

" In May 1993 I received my first visit from family (my father) whom I had not seen for almost eight years. In all I managed to receive 5 visits whilst in the London area under the then CI.37.90 (since replaced by IG.28.93), before being returned to the Northern region, hundreds of miles from my family.

In March 1994, whilst at Parkhurst Prison, Isle of Wight, I formally applied for accumulated visits at a London prison, having been informed by family who I had not seen since October 1985 that they, sister, mother, brother, would be in the London area temporarily. The request was forwarded to J. Gold, Doc 1 Division, Prison Service HQ, who was "overseeing and arranging my programme of moves' under Stage 5 of IG.28.93 (known as 'Continuous Assessment Scheme'). I was unexpectedly transferred back to the Northern Region (Leeds Prison) almost immediately following my application for accumulated visits: no explanation was proffered.

Whilst at Leeds Prison I made a further application for transfer for visits to London, this occasion to the Board of Visitors, supplementing my application with the information that a relative who I had never seen, was visiting England for the first time and had requested to see me.The relative was visiting for two weeks. I also requested explanation for the apparent refusal of the visits application submitted at Parkhurst. No response was received for approximately SIX WEEKS by which time I had been transferred to Full Sutton Prison, York.

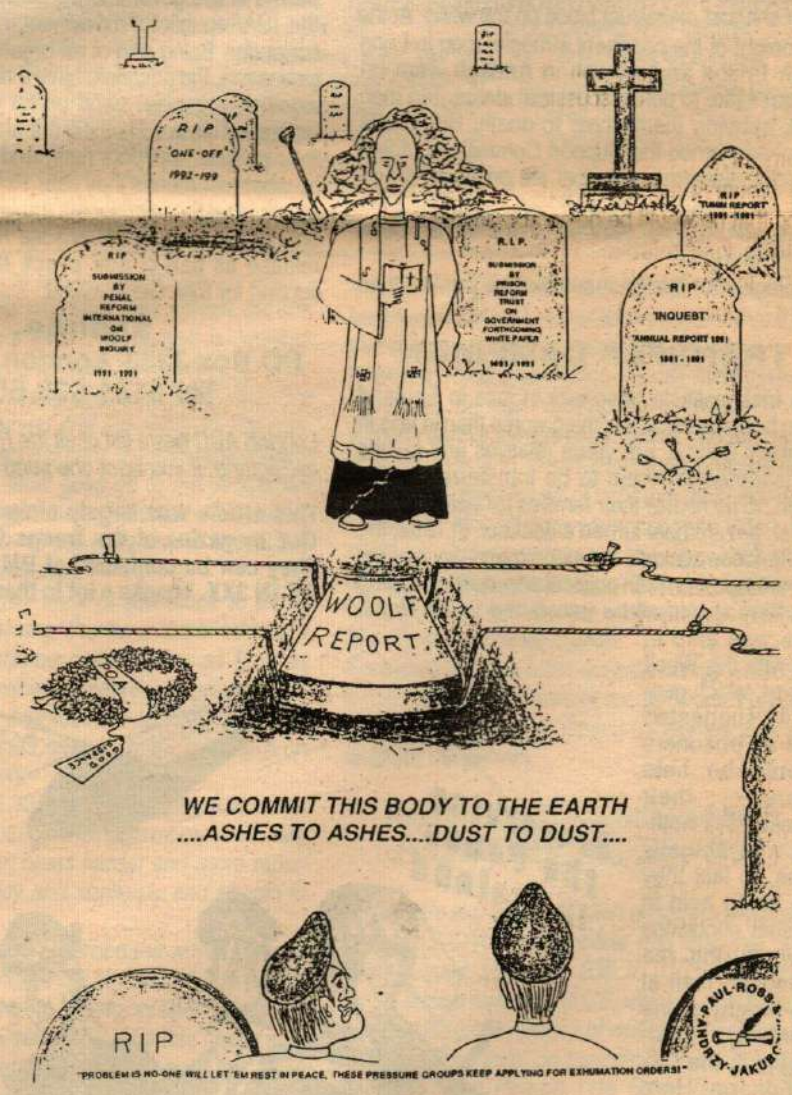
In June 1994 I received a reply from a Ms Mary Denton, Chairwoman Leeds Prison Board of Visitors, stating:

'I have been in touch with Head of Custody Group who are looking into your request regarding 'accumulated visits'(Mr J. Gold). He is looking into this request which you say was made when you were at Parkhurst. You should get a reply from the above department.' Mary Denton, (BoV Leeds), 6 June 1994. No reply was ever received. Similarly a letter from my solicitors to Prison Service HQ requesting an explanation for refusal of visits (Parkhurst application) received no response. By this stage, close family had returned to the midlands and the relative had returned to Australia

On12 November 1994 I formally requested transfer to a London prison for Christmas to receive visits from my father. I had been careful to apply well in advance of Xmas to preclude any possibility of Prison Service HQ justifying refusal. I am, it should be noted, a Category B prisoner, despite the treatment I have been accorded (on a parallel with a Cat A). I was informed that my request had been forwarded to...Mr J. Gold, Doc 1 Division, Prison Service HQ, and that no problems were forseen. I anticipated transfer from Wakefield Segregation Unit where I was being detained at that time under IG,28.93.

On the 28th November I was transferred to the Wolds (Private Sector) Prison without explanation. This was a bizarre allocation, the Wolds being almost exclusively a remand prison, its convicted population consisting of former remand prisoners received back from the courts 'newly convicted', pending transfer to other establishments, I am serving 17 years and should not have been at that prison - it was a transfer that caused considerable surprise amongst state officials to understate the reaction!

On 22 December I was transferred from the Wolds to Wakefield Prison into Category 'A' conditions, ie I was located in one of two special cage cells. There was no explanation for this and my conduct had not justified such location. I was informed on arrival at Wakefield that I would remain in segregation under Prison Rule 43(b), Good Order and



CLOSED VISITS

Only those who have sat and talked to their loved ones through a glass screen can fully understand the degredation behind the expression 'closed visits'. In the six years I have edited the Prisoners' Fightback pages in *Fight Racism!Fight Imperialism!*, I have only twice been forced to sit through this humiliating ordeal. Neither of the men I was visiting was my lover, brother, father, son or close friend, yet never have I realised so strongly what part is played in everyday human interaction by physical contact; never have I been so starkly aware how unnatural it is to sit directly face on, rather than at an angle, to the person you are speaking to; never have I so clearly understood how the voice rises and falls in conversation, how people speaking together lean towards each other, then away, then back again, how natural it is to touch someone's sleeve when sharing a joke...

There aren't many jokes shared on closed visits. But there are votes to be won in them. In June this year, as part of the state revenge for last year's attempted escape from Whitemoor Prison, all 12 prisoners who the Prison Service classified as 'Category A Exceptional High Risk' were told that all their visits, including legal ones, would henceforth be conducted under closed conditions. Even the High Court expressed shock at the idea that a prisoner must speak to his solicitor through glass and wire-mesh and ordered the Governor of Belmarsh Prison to back down on that aspect. But social visits are still closed for these, mainly irish republican prisoners (now 11, following the hard-fought-for transfer of Feilim O' hAdhmaill). 'Ordinary' High Risk Cat A prisoners (this includes all other Republican POWs held in England) suspect they could be next in line for this attack on their rights, with other Category As not far behind. Any attempt to introduce such measures will certainly be met with concerted resistance.

Equally worrying is the increased use of closed visits as a punishment for infringement of prison rules. In the past a prisoner would only be put on closed visits if suspected of receiving illicit items or behaving 'indecently' or abusively on a visit. This was already open to widespread abuse by staff, with prisoners punished by closed visits for such offences as showing family members bruises they had received at the hands of prison officers. But now it seems that any excuse will do. John Kamara, who is serving a life sentence in Wakefield Prison for a murder that he did not commit, was recently 'sentenced' in an internal kangaroo court to have his next four domestic visits under closed conditions: his offence was refusing to provide a urine sample for the compulsory drugs tests introduced under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act. Another prisoner was moved between jails following an allegation that he was dealing drugs, although no evidence of any description was ever produced, and put on closed visits. The Prison Ombudsman has been asked to look into this case. The Prisoners Advice Service [who take on prisoners' legal complaints against prisons and the Prison Service. - Ed] say they face problems fighting such decisions, as most impositions of closed visits are for a month at a time, rendering legal action extremely difficult, as by the time a review of the decision reaches court, the period has expired.

Whether by judicial means or by direct action, the increasing imposition of closed visits, and the even more frightening 'normalisation' accompanying it, whereby a public filled with hype about escapes, drugs, lobsters and who-knows-what-else, considers it perfectly acceptable that prisoners should be denied all human contact with their visitors, must be fought at every turn, by prisoners and everyone who supports them.

Nicki Jameson.

LETTER FROM WHITEMOOR....

"I note that you are interested in visits to prisons... Since the 'escape' from the S.S.U. here, which if you bear in mind, though part of this prison, was not part of this prison in any way in which they were treated, we on the main section of the prison have received a lot of the repercussions from the mistakes that were allowed to go on in the S.S.U. The amount of cameras were doubled in our visits hall, more officers are present and some of the things the actual visitors have to go through to get into the visits makes me wonder who is the actual criminal.

To give you an example: I asked to come to this prison 14 months ago, because i was experiencing problems with my own visits. I had come from one of the most relaxed Cat B prisons in the country, Nottingham.

I founds it very disturbing going on visits here, the atmosphere is very tense, you cannot avoid the camera's presence, because they are moving about, and zooming in on target visits.

One of my visitors is also the mother of my youngest daughter (5 years old), though we were not married, and are only friends now, but close. I do notice when she comes to visit that we get our own camera fixed on us from the start of the visit, and it will remain there until the end. I think this is something to do with her being black, and it is assumed that she might be bringing in drugs.

She has to go through a 'rub-down' coming in to the prison, and so does my daughter, which I object to. But she has remarked on many occasions that "the female officer has seemed to be overzealous in her actions of rubbing down, and paid a lot of attention to her breasts and between her legs....

Anyway, back to the changes since the 'strange' escape that never was from the S.S.U. In respect of th cameras that as I say have doubled, I have asked on many occasions who checks on what's being recorded.

I say this, because before this event in my life I was heavily involved in camera work, and when i see cameras following female visitors who happen to have short skirts on, and are capable of zooming in where and how they like, it makes me indeed curious to what they're actually looking at.

We have also just been issued with yet another new instruction regarding visits, in that "A dog will be present while your visitors are coming through all the various security checks, and if this dog sits down in front of you (visitor), you will be pulled to one side while security staff arrive, and a further rub-down is carried out." Now that don't make one bit of sense to me, because if the officer who carried out the first rub-down has done her/his job, and only a rub-down is going to be repeated, what is the point?

The way I see it, outside the prison they have numerous signs explaining about bringing drink, drugs, or tobacco into the prison, and with the cost if you're caught. So if an officer happens to notice something strange, or if an inmate is caught on the wing with drugs, then it should be dealt with, and not be intimidating everyone else...."

Dean de Silva, NH2564, HM Prison Whitemoor, Longhill Rd, March, Cambs, PE15 0PR.

Dean is interested in receiving letters, so drop him a line. We hope to cover his case in a future issue of Taking Liberties. We've edited this letter slightly for space reasons.

Discipline, and IG.28.93, pending transfer for visits over the Xmas period, to be taken at Belmarsh Prison, London.

I remained at Wakefield over Xmas!

On 3 January I submitted a formal Request/Complaint form, stating I would like some explanation advanced for the refusal of Xmas visits. On 6 January I received a response from the No 1 Governor, stating:

"As discussed when I saw you on Friday I will get Governor Marshall [the Segregation Unit governor] to raise this matter with Mr Gold next week as part of the general discussion about your next move."

Governor 1, 6/1/95.

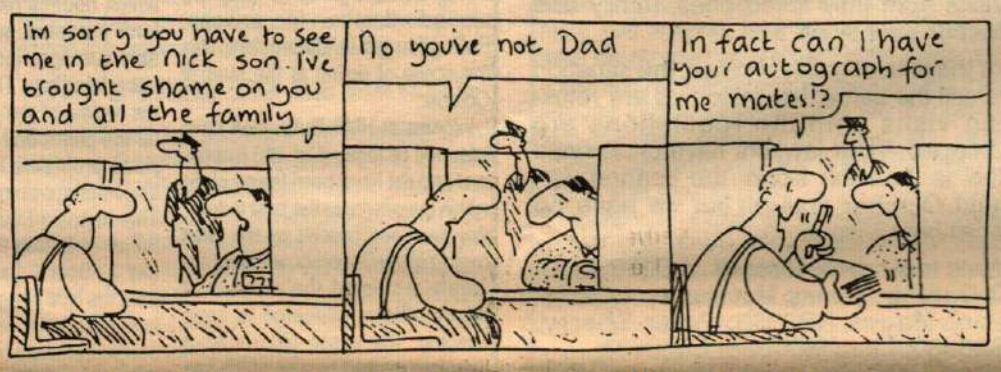
On 8 January I received a letter from my father stating that he would be going abroad that same month to visit relatives in Australia for two months. In view of this information I had to withdraw my application for visits, explaining reasons for withdrawal, ie i would not now be in a position to receive visits due to family going abroad.

'Prison Service logic frequently defies mere mortal imagination', as my colleague Paul Ross once observed, and as if by way of substantiation it was at this point that Prison Service HQ decided, presumably after considering all the relevant circumstances, decided to take a more 'compassionate approach'. I was informed I was to transfer to an unspecified London prison for family visits!!! I pointed out that this was no longer possible due to my family's trip abroad to see relatives and that i had formally withdrawn my application as a consequence. The only response I received was: "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth, you've been complaining for for months about your visits, well now you've got them!"

On 20 January I was transferred from Wakefield to Wandsworth Prison, London. I received a letter from Prison Service HQ, Mr Gower, Population Management Section (PMS), shortly preceding my arrival, telling me I had been transferred to Wandsworth for family visits!

On 22 January I managed to determine that my father WAS still in England, but making preparations for his departure to Australia. I arranged a visit for that day. I was escorted to the visits area and informed that I would receive the visit under closed conditions on the Governor's instructions. Closed visits are conducted in a small room, which is divided by a ground to ceiling partition, communication between prisoner and visitor being conducted through a metal grille, no physical contact is possible. Despite this I was subjected to the humiliating ritual of a strip search, being required, under threat of disciplinary charge and losing the visit if I refused to comply, to 'spread my legs and bend over' Rather than risk the visit being refused I complied. On entering the closed visit room, there were three warders in attendance, who were to remain present throughout the visit, despite the impossibility of physical contact. My father looked confused by all this. He is 73 years old, in ill-health and partially deaf. It was

HUSBAND


I'm sorry you have to see me in the nick son. I've brought shame on you and all the family
No you've not Dad
In fact can I have your autograph for me mates!?

the most degrading experience imaginable. The sight of my father having to lean down to speak through the metal grille, and repeatedly turn his head down, ear to the grille, in order to hear me speak, was like something from a black comedy, made worse by the three prison warders sat three feet away chatting indifferently. My father became visibly upset. I had to cancel the visit after ten minutes rather than continue his ordeal. The memory still haunts me periodically."

This prisoner's account is not unique.

At the entry to every prison a sign confronts visitors:

"HM Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by courts. Our duty is to look after them with humanity..."

It is fitting to conclude with the words of the Prison Service who stated to the Woolf Inquiry:

"The disruption of the inmate's position within the family unit represents one of the most distressing aspects of imprisonment...Enabling inmates, so far as possible, to stay in close and meaningful contact with the family is therefore an essential part of humane treatment, In these terms the improvement of family ties must be a priority for the Prison Service"

Really?

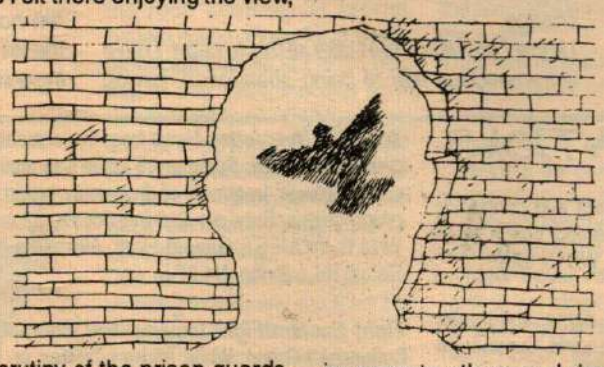
What kind of state can stand up and criticise other countries' human rights policies when such incidents are occurring on a frequent basis in its own backyard? It is indeed a State of hypocrisy and double-talk!

Paul D. Ross, L43279, HM Prison Whitemoor, March, Cambs., PE15 0PR. The account is from Andrzy Jakubczyk, C59058, HM Prison Highdown, Sutton Lane, Sutton, Surrey, SM2.

Paul Ross and Andrzy Jakubczyk have together written many papers and reports on brutality and injustice in the UK prison system, including the book *One Off*. Both have outstanding court actions against prison authorities. As a result, they have been targeted for attack by screws and constant official harassment. Paul was recently assaulted in the block at Whitemoor, with tendons in his foot being severed after his foot was smashed through a glass door by screws.

A VISITOR'S TALE

I sit by the river and for a moment forget everything and simply lose myself in the beauty of the landscape. As I sit there enjoying the view, However, I am suddenly struck by the contrast of what I have just been through and begin to feel guilty for even this small pleasure. How is it possible for me to sit here and admire the scenery when he has to go back to the cold-edged reality of a grey prison cell. The unfairness of it all, the downright maliciousness upon which the prison system is built upsets me, and for a while I just sit there, remembering.



Getting clearance to visit a Category A prisoner had been degrading in itself, without now having to bear the intense scrutiny of the prison guards. I could see the questions they were asking themselves and the assumptions they were making about me. I mean, what kind of woman goes to visit a Cat A prisoner? Especially one she had not known previously? What were my motives? I felt probed and incredibly uneasy. The waiting seemed to go on and on and i longed for contact with the other visitors. But they all seemed to have retreated into their own little units - scared, vulnerable and increasingly isolated.

Upon entering the visiting area I was surprised at how 'normal' everything looked. I could have been entering any coffee shop or canteen to meet a friend for a chat. Except that our time together would not have been constrained, nor would there have been great hulking figures skulking in the background - waiting to pounce on any seemingly suspicious comment or action. As it was, I met him and settled down for a good chat. Barely had we begun to really talk and make some sort of connection with each other, however, than a voice boomed out: "TIME!". Two hours had gone by in the wink of an eye and I found myself sitting outside by the river, thinking.

This had been my first prison visit and it shredded me to think that people could incarcerate others and deny them things that we all crave - true human contact and communication among others. Whilst society is such, that all this does go on, we cannot sit by and let it continue. I had never wanted to tear down a prison so much as after that visit and now I don't feel as if i can rest till we bring about the revolution and dance upon the rubble of every state institution of incarceration: be it prisons, police stations, schools, army bases....

GETTING PETTY IN BELMARSH

Prisoners in the Special Secure Unit at Belmarsh Prison, London, have been fighting with prison authorities for months over their visits, particularly the order for them all to go on closed visits for not just social but legal visits. The prisoners, six of who are to be charged with the attempted escape from Whitemoor Jail a year ago, are being held in the most repressive prison regime in Britain.

From December '94 to April this year, Paul McGhee and Andy Russell were denied exercise or visits after refusing to wear prison unifriom. They went on a dirty protest. In April their lawyers started judicial review proceedings: the prisoncrats backed down, and exercise and visits were restored, without the prisoners having to wear uniform.

In February, Liam McCotter and Danny MacNamee's troubles started. Visiting Orders were issued for them on Feb 22nd, for the 25th. The following day, Maire McCotter received a phone call in Northern Ireland, from the Governor of Belmarsh, telling the visitors not to travel there for the 25th as they hadn't finished fixing cameras over the visits tables. Danny's brother Francis contacted the Irish Dept of Foreign Affairs and MP Seamus Mallon, who seem to have put pressure on. On the 24th, Belmarsh's Governor assured Maire McCotter that the visits would be ready for Monday 27th February. Several times they were re-assured by Bill Nolan at the Irish Dept of Foreign Affairs that things were okay for the visit. On the 28th, Maire spoke to the Governor of Belmarsh by phone, he told her the cameras were working and the visit could go ahead. Francis MacNamee gave the prison contact numbers so they could let them know if there was a problem. They then travelled to England. When they tried to visit on March 1st, they were both told they couldn't visit as they weren't approved [Anyone wanting to visit a Category A prisoner has to be approved, usually involving mountains of forms, police questioning, harassment, and refusal for petty reasons, TL note]. They have both been approved visitors for 8 years! Eventually the Governor was contacted and he agreed to meet them. He told them the cameras weren't working yet. This was proved to be an out-and-out lie as on leaving Maire and Francis talked to other people visiting Cat A prisoners who told them the cameras WERE working. On March 2nd, Maire and Francis contacted Liberty, the Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas, the SDLP, the Irish Embassy, MPs and solicitor Gareth Pierce. The next day they were told the visit could go ahead. They finally got in to see Liam and Danny at 3.50pm; the visit was terminated at 4.30pm.

The above aggro is not an isolated case. Clearly it was purely spite and an attempt to deny the two men contact. This is not to mention the humiliating body-searches and snide treatment from screws that all the visitors have to face. Since then came the order that all 12 'Exceptional High Risk' Cat A prisoners (including all the six ex-Whitemoor prisoners in Belmarsh) were to have all their visits under closed conditions, even legal visits. Lawyers for the men in Belmarsh took this to Judicial Review. Although the stipulation on legal visits was quashed by the court, leading to the Governor backing down, the order on social visits remained. As closed visits are degrading, and emotionally very upsetting for prisoners and visitors, the prisoners refused to go on them. They have been denied visits from their loved ones, family and friends ever since.

At the time of going to press, the situation is still the same, the prisoners are refusing visits until the regulations are dropped. Their lawyers have challenged this is the High Court. the hearing was held October 2nd-4th,but we have no word how it went.

Write to **Andrew Russell** JA0233; **Liam O Duibhir**; **Danny MacNamee** L48616; **Paul Magee** BR3783; **Peter Sherry**, B&5880; **Liam McCotter** LB83693; all at HMP Belmarsh, Western Way, London, SE28.

Jimmy Walker R.I.P

"Hello, TL,

and to all prisoners who gave evidence at the inquest of James Walker at Beverley Crown Court, January '95. Jimmy was found fatally injured in the Seg Unit at Full Sutton Prison, 30th June 1993. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death. I am at present gathering evidence to take matters further. First of all I would like to thank all the prisoners who gave clear, articulate, credible evidence at his inquest, and would like to hear from them as I know they are on the move or have been moved. So I can write to them all personally and also get as much information as possible about Jimmy, his stay in Walton, Liverpool, being given Cat B, then Cat A, then A.E., then Cat B, moved to Whitemoor, then Cat A.E. move to Full Sutton. Anyone who knew Jimmy, spoke to him, saw him, wrote to him, also any prison staff who have anything to say, the Group 4 staff who transported him, BoVs (prison visitors), probation officers, priests, the judge and jury, anyone who can help. Jimmy was concerned freemasons had interfered at his trial, where he got 14 years for conspiracy to rob.-It was said at court staff were laughing when Jimmy was found, I have no reason to doubt this, as I seen them laugh at the inquest. They can't help having the personalities they have, but unfortunately they have no spirit. I look forward to hearing from people with spirit, especially:

B.E. BLOUT, NI1501,
G.C. DAVIES, DW3325,
P.L. DAVIES, B61593,
W. DEMPSEY, CF0021,
K.C. DOOLAN, DV2665,
S.B. FOX, HK1196,
T.J. GRIMWOOD, B83354,
J.P. McCAUGHREY, BJ2071,
M. STONER-SEED,JF2071,
D.K. WARD, CT3077,
P.J. UNDERWOOD, CX0124
S.C. WOOD, CW2722.

Letters can be sent to: James Walker Inquest, Jeremy Hawthorne, Malcolm J. Gregg and co., Second Floor, Century Building, 31 North John Street, Liverpool, L2 6RG.
Thank you."

[TL Note: This letter was sent to us without a signature, although from the content we assume it to be from a relative or friend of James Walker, who died in his cell at Full Sutton, as the writer says. If any of the above prisoners (or anyone else) reads this, or anyone who knows where these people are now, we urge them to get in touch with the address above.]

STOP PRESS:

UPRISING IN BULLINGDON

According to a fax received from Prison Watch, a group campaigning around deaths in prisons, Bullingdon jail in Oxfordshire was the scene of rioting at the start of October:

" Inmates at HMP Bullingdon have informed us today (Oct 4th) that unrest and riot have been taking place within the prison for the past 6 days. this has been caused by the strict regime of the Governor, who has severely restricted the number of prison officers allocated to each Landing. The prison officers have therefore worked to rule which has entailed inmates being locked down for 24 hours and meals being individually taken to cells, which have consequently been cold and served 4 hours late.Inmates have responded by destroying the prison. We are told the protest centred in b Wing, which houses remand and short term prisoners, where copnsiderable damage, including flooding, has taken place. The inmates blame the regime of the present governor for the unrest and maintain that serious problems have developed since her appointment.

This morning David Giles age 30, father of 2, was found hanging in cell 19 Spur 2 Landing 2 B Wing, from the light fitting. he had been on hunger strike for several days & had sought treatment from the doctor for depression 2 days ago...We blame the management of the prison service for creating conditions at Bullingdon that have inmates no other option than to protest. The death of David Giles could probably have been prevented...This is the 2nd unnatural death at bullingdon in 1995, and the 52nd in prison nationally. WE SUPPORT THE RIGHT OF PRISONERS TO PROTEST AGAINST INTOLERABLE REGIMES & CONDITIONS. WE EXPECT FURTHER PROTEST FOLLOWING THIS DEATH."

PRISON WATCH:

Pete Moore, 24 Rochester Close, Derby. Tel 01332 756158, fax 753515,mobile 0585 578029.

Tim Taggett, 145 Coronation Ave, Keynsham, Bristol. Tel 0117 9070565.

Visiting Day

By Kenneth Edward Hartman, California Correctional Institution, Tehachapi, California, USA.

It seems as if time distends while you're waiting for something you want. on a Saturday morning while I am awaiting a visit from my wife, it's as if the very rotation of the planet has ground to a halt. The wait actually begins on Friday at midnight. I work the graveyard shift so I am awake the entire night before the visit. I glance at the clock and figure i have between 9 and 10-and-a-half hours before I see her. So begins my weekly vigil.

With my wife there is a predictability to her demeanour at our visits. If she has a bad week, which seems more often than not, she'll arrive late with a challenging attitude of Hey, you better not complain, mister. On the good weeks, she'll be early and friendly.

I am sure that being married to a man serving possibly the rest of his life behind bars must be a great source of stress for her. But I have been serving this sentence for as long as she has known me. Sometimes she acts like she just found this out yesterday. Believe me, I know that learning to accept a terrible reality is difficult, but I have not had the luxury of wondering about it. I have lived it.

I go to breakfast a bit groggy from the lack of sleep the night before, and hope the cop in the bubble that day will let me take a shower when he is finished feeding me. Luckily, this has been the case recently, but there were many times when I was forced to wash myself in the sink because they didn't want to run the showers in the morning. I suppose water is more expensive in the morning.

While I'm in the shower, I take a mental inventory of the past week's conversations and try to figure out if there have been any problems, any reasons for a delay or an angry visit. I wonder how she is, and if she is just then getting on the road from Los Angeles and making her way up to the mountains.

"I am...after all these years, filled with a kind of giddy joy at seeing the woman i love."

During the week we speak at least once on the phone, and her responses are fairly good indicators for the tenor of the coming visit. "I'm having a good week" bodes well, but "I'm having a pretty good week" is tantamount to "I'm getting ready to jump off a bridge". Sometimes a "good" can change to a "pretty good" in three days, which leaves me wondering what happened, what the real source of the problem is, and of course the real problem is, I am in prison. This is the one thing I cannot change.

I know I shouldn't, but I take all this to heart. I have a tremendous fear of being abandoned, having been abandoned by my family and friends when I came to prison. My wife loves me, I know, but she hates my predicament. The hatred is growing while the love is merely holding its own.

Thoughts of this kind plague me most after I've showered and shaved and am ready for the visit. At this time, around 8.30 am, there is only an hour or two left to go. Most guys go to the yard when they are expecting a visit, more to be distracted than anything else. In the company of others, it's easy to feign indifference.

Instead, I block my view of the clock to avoid checking the time each minute. I postpone dressing for as long as possible, saving this ritual as my final distraction. I have laid out my clothes earlier, and i put them on slowly.

At 9.30 I can feel the physical stress growing more pronounced. My heart beats harder and more rapidly: I breathe quickly and shallowly and i begin to sweat.

By 10 o'clock, I have assumed the worst. My wife has been in an accident, she has got into a fight with the cops at the front gate, or (and this is the most painful to contemplate), she has finally succumbed to the hatred and anger and has once and for all abandoned me to this world. In these few hours I lose a measure of my humanity, and the toll is deeply felt. A man I knew who was serving a life sentence fell in love and he told me how he had never felt punished until then, until he embarked on this roller-coaster of heartache and joy that is the hallmark of prison love affairs.

Between 10.00 and 10.30, the cop in the bubble signals to me that I have a visit. The walk to the visiting room is always filled with a strange mixture of happiness and dread as I wonder what frame she'll be in, what frame of mind I will find myself in. I am also, after all these years, filled with a kind of giddy joy at seeing the woman I love. I am glad I wait on Saturday mornings, I just wish I could be waiting in our bed for her to come back from the kitchen or the corner market.

Fantasies like this often emerge during visits, For a few brief hours, traces of the real world sneak in, accompanied by the smiles of women and the laughter of children.

Reprinted with permission from PRISON LIFE, May/June 1995.

Prison Life is a big circulation prisoners magazine in the USA, written by cons and ex-cons. Well worth a read. Subs are $36.75 (US money only) for six issues outside the US, which is a lot but you get over 80 glossy pages of writings, prisoners art, views on life inside, on the criminal justice system etc. Write to Prison Life Subs Dept, 4200 Westheimer, Suite 160, Houston, TX. 77027-4426, USA. Thanks a lot to them.

INTERESTING PUBLICATIONS

Whitemoor Watch. Three prisoners accounts of recent and continuing dirty protests in the notorious Punishment Block at Whitemoor prison. Send an A4 SAE to Larkin Publications, BCM 5909, London, WC1N 3XX.

Earth Liberation Prisoners News. Info on animal rights, anti-roads, MOVE, eco-war and anti-military prisoners around the world. Summer 95 issue out. Donation to ELP,c/o Box 23, 5 High St, Glastobury, Somerset.

Conviction News. No14 ,hot off the press, latest issue of the mag covering framed prisoners' cases. This issue has an updated version of their brilliant 'Advice to Framed Prisoners': well worth a read. Free to prisoners, Subs £5 waged, £3 waged (4 issues). Conviction, PO Box 522, Sheffield, S1 3FF.

INQUEST Newsletter. News from the campaigning and advice group on deaths in custody. Summer 95 issue has stuff on police and immigration service killings, treatment of drug-users inside, and reports on inquests of prison deaths. Subs are £10 individuals, £2 unwaged, £20 organisations. Write to INQUEST, Ground Floor, Alexandra National House, 330 Seven Sisters Rd, London, N4 2PJ.

Fight Racism!Fight Imperialism!. Newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Group. While *Taking Liberties*, er, largely disagrees with their politics, they always have a wicked Prisoners Fightback page, which is worth a read. BCM 5909, London, WC1N 3XX, or in leftwing bookshops.

Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign Information Bulletin. Detailed background on Oliver's case, describing his frame-up by police in East London for a murder he didn't commit. Affiliate to the campaign: individuals £2 unwaged, £5 waged; organisations: local £10, funded £25, national £50. PO Box 6580, London, E6 3TL

Prisoners Justice Day Bulletin, Vol. 3, No.2.(July 95). Produced by the Toronto Prisoners justice Day Committee, as part of their organising of events around PJD on August 10th. This issue, brought out before the actions, covers Making International Links, including with women prisoners in Chile, and prisoners writings. Should be another issue out soon. Write to: PJD Cttee of Toronto, c/o A Space, 183 Bathurst St, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T 2R7.

In the last issue of T.L, we forgot to put in the address of ***Prison News Service***, Canada's excellent prisoners paper. Sorry. It's PO Box 5052, Stn A, Toronto, ONT. M5W 1WA, Canada.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Jerry Dale Lowe

In September last year, United Mineworkers of America member **Jerry Dale Lowe** was sentenced to nearly 11 years in prison, framed on charges of 'interfering with interstate commerce', over the shooting to death of a scab contractor at Arch Mineral's Ruffner Mine in Logan County, West Virginia, in the summer of 1993. Lowe was singled out by the authorities because he was a UMWA union activist and picket line militant.

The scab who was killed was part of a convoy leaving the mine during a strike there. He was shot in the back of the head, from the direction of a group of heavies working for the mine bosses. Jerry Dale Lowe was never charged under state laws, for murder or anything else. So in order to make an example out of him and seven other militant miners from Ruffner, the coal bosses and the federal government turned a local contractor into 'interstate commerce'. The other seven Logan county miners accepted plea bargains and received 120 days jail and $500 fines.

The dice were loaded from the start. The US Attorney (prosecutor) for Charleston, West Virginia, Rebecca Betts, was recruited from a law firm representing the mine-owners, Arch Mineral. Turning a blind eye to Arch Mineral's armed goons who daily attacked strikers with tear gas and bullets, Assistant US attorney John Parr triumphantly hailed Lowe's conviction, saying that the government was going after 'violence on the labour strike lines', by railroading the miner to a long stretch inside.

As UMWA Local 5958 safety committee chairman and a picket line militant, Jerry Dale Lowe has been jailed for fighting in defence of himself and fellow workers against the usual alliance of bosses and the authorities. Anyone who remembers the 1984/85 miners strike here will know the feeling!

Support Jerry Dale Lowe: we don't have an address for him, but contributions for his legal defence fund can be sent to **Region II Defence Fund, 4500 MacCorkle Avenue S.E., Charleston, WV. 25304, USA,** earmarked for 'Ruffner miners'.

Cheers to the Partisan Defence Committee.

JOHN PEROTTI ENDS HUNGER STRIKE

John Perotti, long time US prison activist and jailhouse lawyer, has been locked up in the Ohio prison system for two decades. He has continuously fought for both his rights and the rights of other prisoners. He is currently incarcerated at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF), a prison that has a history of brutalising him for standing up for his rights. John has won several lawsuits against them for their treatment of him and conditions there. When he was last held there, in 1990, he was transferred out after being brutally beaten by twelve SOCF guards: retaliation for his talking to officials from the Ohio Correctional Institution Inspection Committee about abuse and violence in SOCF. He was leg-shackled and his hands tied behind his back while he was beaten.

John recently undertook a hunger strike, from July to September - 73 days in all - to protest his confinement there, and demanding to be transferred to another Ohio prison, and eventually out of the state, where he will hopefully be out of reach of vindictive prison guards and officials. He got very weak and dangerously ill, with damage to his kidneys. The prison authorities promised him medical attention if he came off the strike, and after careful thought he did, but they have not kept their promise.

John has asked supporters to try focussing some energy on trying to get some political pressure, as pressure from supporters on the prison bureaucracy has not achieved anything. Ohio State Senator Dennis Kuchinich has a fairly progressive record on criminal justice issues, and it is possible that if there is enough pressure he will look into John's case. It's a long shot, but we need to try everything. Please write or phone Kuchinich on John's behalf. John's physical and psychological health has deteriorated ever since he was sent back to SOCF. It's important that we get him out!

Copies of a sample letter and more details are available from London or Huddersfield ABC (see back page) if people want them.

Write to:
Senator Dennis Kuchinich,
State House,
Columbus, OH. 43266-0604,
USA.

State Representative Rhine McLin,
16 East Broad St,
9th Fl.,# 901,
Columbus, OH. 43216,
USA.

Congressman Louis Stokes,
New Federal Building,
240 E. 9th St.,
Cleveland, OH. 44114,

JOHN PEROTTI, #167712,
SOCF, PO Box 45699,
Lucasville, OH. 45699, USA.

BULLDOZER STYLEE!

Twelve Danish prisoners escaped from a Copenhagen jail on August 27th, when an accomplice drove a bulldozer through the prison wall, police said. The cons were strolling in the yard of Vridsloeselille State prison at about 5pm, when the bulldozer smashed an opening in the wall. Two of the fugitives were nicked within a few hours. We don't know how many are still at large. If you're gonna do it, do it in style!

JULIO GETTING OUT

Mississippi State Penitentiary - the Plantation, as it is known to its 10,000 inmates - is one of the most notorious prisons in the US penal system. Julio Wicks is a black prisoner who is now coming to the end of a 12-year sentence: he will be released in March 1996. For the past 3 years Julio has been held in solitary confinement in Unit 3B, as he is regarded by the authorities - the 'Majors' and the 'Colonels', as the guards are known - as a political threat to the smooth running of the Plantation.

In his letters Julio has described how the past 11 years of his life have been spent. On arriving at the Plantation, Julio, who comes from Harlem, was ordered out into the fields to pick cotton. he refused and was badly beaten up. After ten days in the hole he was offered food, new clothing and the chance to go back to the main prison population if he would agree to work in the field. Once again he refused: this time he was nearly beaten to death by the 'majors' who then left him to die in the hole. Fortunately the prison was under investigation and a visiting team of civil rights lawyers etc found Julio. The guards responsible were dismissed within days and Julio was allowed to work in the prison school, where he quickly progressed from student to tutor. However what he was teaching was not to the liking of the adminstration, who accused him of 'imposing his political views' on the other prisoners (not something prison authorities would EVER think of doing). As a result Julio was taken out of circulation and now spends 24 hours a day in solitary confinement. Much of his time is spent in study: Julio has acquired qualifications in law Business admin. He uses his knowledge to file civil liberties suits against the authorities on his own and other prisoners' behalf. Despite his own misery, Julio always finds time for other prisoners and their problems A former Black Panther, he continues to play his part in the struggle, and is looking forward to visiting Britain on his release, A Reading-based anti-racist has been writing to Julio for the past year, sending him funds etc and will be going to Mississippi in March to greet Julio as he leaves prison. Julio will need funds. The prison will give him 20 dollars and a ride to the state line and that's about it. Can you help? All money raised will go directly to Julio himself. Julio's correspondent hopes to raise about $1000 before March.If you can organise a benefit gig/fundraising event, or make a donation, get in touch with:

KEVIN, c/o Rising Sun, 30 Silver St, Reading, RG1.

MUMIA: ALIVE AND FIGHTING

Black revolutionary Mumia Abu-Jamal is still fighting for his life on Death Row in the USA. Mumia, a former Black Panther and supporter of the radical black group MOVE, was framed in 1981 for the murder of a Philadelphia copper, which he has always denied. All the forensics point to his innocence, but the authorities had been after him for years as he was a revolutionaryand a thorn in their side.This June, his execution warrant was signed, and his death scheduled for August 17th.

The international campaign to save his life and free him stepped up: this summer there were demos and actrions all across America and around the world, Mumia received 10,000 letters and cards, and the Judge, State Governor and Prosecutor, and the US government were inundated with protests and demands that he be reprieved and freed. Some governments even stepped in and asked for a retrial.

Mumia's execution was stayed with 10 days to go to allow him a further hearing for an appeal. However, he appeared on September 11th in front of Judge Albert Sabo, the man who presided over his biased trial, and knocked back his appeals; the judge who has condemned more people (32) to death in the US than any other, and a good mate of the Philly Fraternal Order of Police, loudest in calling for Mumia's death. (Why has HE not been offed?)

He denied Mumia's appeal for a new trial, putting Mumia right back in the firing line.

Latest news is that Mumia's lawyers are filing papers on October 16th, appealing against Scabbo's decision, so it is unclearwhere the case could go from here.Mumia has now spent nearly fourteen years on death row.

There is an ongoing investigationinto Philadelphia police force: 6 officers have pleaded guilty to 'fabricating & planting evidence,stealing and physical abuse of citizens'.Tut tut, weren't they told at Police Academy not to get caught? Maybe they should do an exchange with Stoke Newington.People are getting released over this scandal, it's about time.It's vital that people get it together and protest, to save our brother's life.

WRITE TO: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA. 15370-8090,USA. e-mail: mumia@aol.com.

Protest to: State Governor Thomas Ridge, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA. 17120,USA;

Offers of support/help:International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia, PO Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA. 19143. Hotline: USA (215) 476 8812

THE ITALIAN JOB

Last September five anarchists got nicked in Italy after a failed bank robbery, including Jean Weir, long-time anarchist, who has been involved in the magazine Insurrection, Elephant press, among other projects.Three got sentenced to five years, one to six years in jail, and one got off. The cops and media tried to get them done for all the bank jobs in the area, and link them up with 'international terrorism'. The four convicted deny any but the one they got caught at. In a statement they say:

> "We are anarchist individuals moved by a common sentiment of liberty. Our personal need for money has never found satisfaction in exploitation, whether of ourselves or others. We decided to direct our attention towards a bank, we all know the responsibilities of such structures. the action we carried out is therefore to be considered an act of re-appropriation for personal need."

Write to:

Antonio Budini, Christos Stratigopoulos,
Carlo Tesseri,
at Casa Circondariale, Via Pilati 6, 38100 Trento, Italy;
Jean Weir,
Via Camporgnago 40, 20090 Opera, Italy.

BOOKS FROM THE BOOT CAMPS...

Mega-trendy ABC merchandise and helpful info and resources, all available from the London ABC address. **All cheques/POs payable to 'Anarchist Black Cross'**

PAMPHLETS/BOOKS

In the Strongbox by Robert Mawdsley. A first hand account of life in Parkhurst Prison's strongbox cells.Published by London ABC. 40p plus 30p P&P.

Mechanical Restraints by Paul Ross/Patricia Ford.Leg-irons and ratchet handcuffs in UK jails. Published by London ABC. 30p plus 30p P&P.

Pissing in the Same Pot by Robert Taylor/Manchester ABC Robert's framing by Manchester Police, his campaigns for freedom, and his 1992 escape. £1.50 plus 30p P&P.

A Day Mournful and Overcast by a member of the Iron Column, the ex-cons militia in the Spanish revolution/civil war. Emotional and personal attack on prisons and hierarchies. Published by London ABC. 40p plus 30p P&P.

From Alcatraz to Marion To Florence - Control Units in the US. The spread of high security control units in the US, aimed at controlling political prisoners. £1.50 plus 30p P+P.

Until All Are Free. The trial statement of US revolutionary prisoner Ray-Luc Levasseur. 50p & 30p P+P.

Why anti-authoritarian? by Larry Giddings. Another US revolutionary prisoner explains his ideas. 30p plus 30p P&P.

A Brief History of the New Afrikan Prison Struggle by Sundiata Accoli. Black Panther prisoner Sundiata's account of the prisoners of the black liberation movement in the USA. £1 plus 30p P&P.

Without a Trace: A Forensics Manual for You and Me. How not to end up in prison in the first place. £1.50 plus 30p P&P.(Sorry the price has gone up!)

Strangeways: A Serious Disturbance. By Nicki Jameson & Eric Allison. Fine book on the 1990 Uprising, the background, life at Strangeways, and much more. £6 plus 60p P&P.

Who Killed Patrick Quinn? The framing of Malcolm Kennedy. The story of how cops killed Pat Quinn in Hammersmith Police Station, then fitted an innocent man up for his murder.£.95 plus 50p P&P. Published by Hackney Community Defence Association.

T-SHIRTS

Two designs. White on black, or black on red. XL.£6 inc P&P.

BENEFIT LP.

"Endless Struggle:The Worst of the 1 in 12 Club Vol12/13." Punky, punky, punky. £6 inc P&P.

POSTERS

Remember We're Still Here: Support Anarchist/ Class Struggle Prisoners – an ABC poster in red and black. 50p plus 30p P+P. Also, a set of 10 one colour ABC posters, stunning anti-prison designs, £2 for the l

BADGES

The Black Cross Fist as a wicked metal badge – £1.20 & 30p P+P.

PATCHES

ABC cloth patches, only 40p plus 30p P&P.

ABC LEAFLETS.

Send SAEs/donation.

Supporting class struggle prisoners: **An intro to the ideas of the ABC.**

Writing to Prisoners. Advice if you're writing for the first time.

Practical Support for Prisoners How to send stuff into jails, visits, letters, etc.

Getting the Best Defence from a Solicitor.Some experience and advice.

Suing the Police If you've been nicked, beaten up, abused by the cops, try suing 'em.

ABC Prisoners List a list of the prisoners we are supporting, or know need support. Essential.

No Comment: the defendant's guide to arrest With Criminal Justice Act update.

For a small extra donation we'll shove in a bundle of leaflets on prisoners and prison issues.

SUBSCRIBE TO TAKING LIBERTIES

SUBS FOR A YEAR OR 4 ISSUES:

UNWAGED: £3 .
WAGED: £5 .
ORGANISATIONS/FILTHY RICH: £10.

ABC GROUPS

Brighton ABC – c/o Brighton Unemployed Centre, Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton
Essex ABC – c/o Box A, 12 Mill Rd, Cambridge
Highlands ABC – PO Box 5754. Elgin OV30 2ZD
Glasgow ABC - c/o Glasgow Solidarity Centre, 3 Royal Exchange Court, 85-87 Queen St, Glasgow, G1 3PA.
Huddersfield ABC – 17-21 Chapel St, Bradford BD1 5DT
Leeds ABC - c/o LAG, 145-149 Cardigan Rd, Burley, Leeds, LS6
London ABC – c/o 121 Railton Road, London, SE24 0LR
Manchester ABC – Box 8, 1 Newton St, Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 8HW
Newcastle ABC – c/o PO Box 1TA, Newcastle, NE99 1TA
Nottingham ABC – PO Box 192, Nottingham NG1 1FJ
Reading ABC – Folder 19, Rising Sun Institute, 30 Silver St., Reading, RG1.
Sheffield ABC – PO Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY

OTHER CONTACTS

Conviction – PO Box 522, Sheffield, S1 3FF. (Supports framed prisoners.)
Innocent - Dept 54, 1 Newton St, Manchester, M1 8HW.(Campaign against police frame-ups in Manchester.)